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Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 EB-07 COME-00 INT-05 DLOS-09
OES-07 /096 W
----------131051Z 046739 /20
P R 130950Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8584
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 8744

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: DIET ENDS REGULAR SESSION

REF: TOKYO 7976

SUMMARY. GIVEN SLIM CONSERVATIVE MAJORITIES IN BOTH HOUSES, RESULTS OF DIET SESSION JUST ENDED MAY SERVE AS PORTENT OF FUTURE DIET OPERATIONS. WHILE RESULTS WERE ENCOURAGING IN TERMS OF GENERALLY BUSINESS-LIKE PROCEEDINGS, ACTION ON CERTAIN CONTROVERSIAL BILLS SHOWED THAT SMALLER CENTRIST PARTIES INCREASINGLY HOLD KEY TO DIET SUCCESS OR FAILURE. END SUMMARY.

1. DIET ENDED ITS REGULAR SESSION JUNE 9 WITH FINAL-DAY PASSAGE OF US-JAPAN FISHERIES AGREEMENT AND SOVIET-JAPAN PROVISIONAL FISHERIES AGREEMENT. AS REPORTED
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REFTEL, JAPAN-KOREA CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT WAS ENACTED AUTOMATICALLY WITHOUT UPPER HOUSE ACTION JUNE 8. DUE TO DISAGREEMENT AMONG CONSERVATIVES, WIDELY EXPECTED DIET RESOLUTION CALLING FOR EARLY CONCLUSION OF JAPAN-PRC PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP TREATY WAS NOT INTRODUCED.

2. OVER-ALL DIET PERFORMANCE WAS IMPRESSIVE. UNUSUALLY HIGH

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PROPORTION (85.5 PERCENT) OF ITEMS INTRODUCED WERE PASSED,
A RECORD EXCEEDED ONLY ONCE IN JAPANESE POST-WAR HISTORY.
IN PART, THIS WAS DUE TO TRADITIONAL ACROSS-THE-BOARD
SUPPORT FOR BULK OF LEGISLATION INTRODUCED. (JSP, FOR
EXAMPLE, HAS OVER YEARS VOTED FOR MORE THAN 70 PERCENT OF ALL
LEGISLATION INTRODUCED ON AVERAGE, AND EVEN JCP HAS FAVORED
MORE THAN 50 PERCENT.) BUT TWO NEW DEVELOPMENTS HELPED
ACCOUNT FOR HIGH PROPORTION OF CONTROVERSIAL LEGISLATION
PASSED THIS TIME.

3. FIRST WAS LDP WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE. THIS WAS
NOT APPARENT AT OUTSET AND ONLY BECAME FACT AFTER
OPPOSITION PARTIES UNITED TO FORCE REVISION OF BUDGET
TO PROVIDE SUBSTANTIAL INCOME TAX REBATES. ALTHOUGH LDP
WAS SHARPLY DIVIDED ON WISDOM OF COMPROMISING AT TIME,
THEY HAD LITTLE CHOICE, AND "DISCUSSION AND COMPROMISE"
BECAME DIET SESSION THEME FOR FIRST TIME SINCE LDP
ESTABLISHMENT TWENTY YEARS AGO. FULLY THIRTY PERCENT
OF ALL BILLS PASSED WERE REVISED. AT SAME TIME, AND
MORE REMARKED BY POLITICIANS AND JOURNALISTS WITH WHOM
WE HAVE TALKED, OPPOSITION PARTIES FINDING THEMSELVES
IN PUBLIC SPOTLIGHT AS NEVER BEFORE, ACTED MUCH MORE
RESPONSIBLY THAN IN PAST SESSIONS. ONLY ON THREE
OCCASIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, DID JSP BOYCOTT DIET DELIBERATIONS,
AN ALL TOO FAMILIAR PHENOMENON IN PAST SESSIONS.

4. RESULT WAS ALL-PARTY AGREEMENT ON EXTENSION OF
JAPANESE TERRITORIAL WATERS TO TWELVE MILES, EXTENSION OF
EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE TO TWO HUNDRED MILES, JAPAN-
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US AND JAPAN-SOVIET FISHERIES AGREEMENTS, AND MUCH-DEBATED
ANTI-MONOPOLY BILL. WITH HELP OF DSP, LDP WAS ABLE TO
PASS LONG-PENDING JAPAN-ROK CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT.
WITH SUPPORT OF DSP AND NLC, LDP PUT THROUGH OKINAWA
LAND BILL, ALTHOUGH NOT IN FORM ORIGINALLY INTRODUCED.

5. THERE REMAINED, HOWEVER, SHARP REMINDERS OF PAST
CONFRONTATION TACTICS, BEST ILLUSTRATED BY CONTINUED JSP
AND JCP UNWILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN DEBATE ON SHELF
AGREEMENT ON GROUNDS THEY DID NOT ADMIT FORMALLY
EXISTENCE OF ROK. THERE WERE ALSO FREQUENT DISPLYS OF
OPPOSITION PARTY DISUNITY. THEY FRAGMENTED, FOR EXAMPLE,
OVER WHETHER TO INTRODUCE NON-CONFIDENCE MOTIONS IN WAKE
OF CONTROVERSIAL TWELVE-DAY DIET EXTENSION WHICH ASSURED
CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT PASSAGE. AS MUCH AS POLICY
DIFFERENCES, THESE ACTIONS REFLECTED OPPOSITION PARTY
DESIRES TO DISTINGUISH THEMSELVES AS JULY UPPER HOUSE
ELECTION NEARED. LDP UNITY IN TURN SHOWED STRAINS,
WHICH RESURFACED IN FINAL DAYS OVER DECISION NOT TO

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INTRODUCE DIET RESOLUTION FAVORING EARLY CONCLUSION OF PFT.

6. COMMENT. SLIM LDP MAJORITIES IN BOTH HOUSES AND CONSERVATIVES' MINORITY POSITION IN SOME COMMITTEES HAVE LED TO CLOSE EXAMINATION OF RESULTS OF DIET SESSION AS POSSIBLE INDICATOR OF FUTURE DIET OPERATIONS. IN OUR DISCUSSIONS OF DIET RESULTS, WIDE SPECTRUM OF SENIOR POLITICIANS, JOURNALISTS AND COMMENTATORS HAVE BEEN ALMOST UNANIMOUS IN VIEWING DIET ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS GENERALLY CONSTRUCTIVE AND ENCOURAGING FOR FUTURE. THERE WAS REMARKABLE AGREEMENT THAT LDP WOULD CONTINUE TO BE ABLE TO PASS LEGISLATION WITH HELP OF SMALLER CENTRIST PARTIES, MANY POINTING OUT THAT SUCH COOPERATION WOULD BE ENCOURAGED BY GLARE OF PUBLICITY AND PROSPECT OF CRITICISM. (IN THIS CONNECTION, TOP ASAHI EDITORS TOLD EMBOFFS JUNE 10 THAT ASAHI, LONG KNOWN FOR ITS GENERALLY ANTI-RULING-PARTY STANCE, WOULD BE TREATING ALL PARTIES MORE EVEN-
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HANDEDLY AS THEY INCREASINGLY SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEGISLATION.) IN FINAL ANALYSIS, HOWEVER, IT WILL BE LARGELY UP TO SMALLER CENTRIST PARTIES -- DSP, NLC AND CGP. THEIR WILLINGNESS OR UNWILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE WITH LDP IS LIKELY TO DECIDE FATE OF CONTROVERSIAL LEGISLATION IN FUTURE.
MANSFIELD

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